

## Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 236359

EXDIS TOSEC 199

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, PFOR, US, IN

SUBJECT: U.S. REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: (1) SECTO 29 (MOSCOW 16138); (2) TOSEC 29 (NEW DELHI 14185).

1. MRS. GANDHI'S ASSUMPTION THAT "THE U.S. IS ORGANIZING OTHER COUNTRIES TO RETARD INDIA'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT" MAY BE BASED ON SOME COMBINATION OF FOLLOWING FACTS:

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2. PRESENT PLANS AND ACTIONS TO CONSULT KEY SUPPLIER STATES AND POSSIBLY HOLD SMALL CONFERENCE OF SUCH STATES ARE DESIGNED TO TIGHTEN SAFEGUARDS GENERALLY. THERE ARE NO PROPOSALS SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT INDIA. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE RESULTS OF THESE MULTILATERAL EFFORTS COULD AFFECT INDIA ADVERSELY. WHILE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE, INDIANS MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT DETAILED SAFEGUARDS OBJECTIVES OF THESE CONTACTS, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE PLANS FOR CONFERENCE TIGHTLY HELD.

3.- SINCE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, WE HAVE HELD EXTENSIVE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON NON-PROLIFERATION WITH CANADIANS, BRITISH, AND GERMANS. INDIAN PROBLEM WAS DISCUSSED IN THESE BILATERALS. IT SEEMS MORE THAN POSSIBLE THAT INDIANS ARE AWARE OF FACT OF THESE MEETINGS, IF NOT CONTENTS.

4. IN SEPTEMBER, PRINCIPAL NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS AGREED TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS ON EXPORTS IN IAEA CONTEXT. BASIC FACTS AND DOCUMENTATION WERE UNCLASSIFIED AND WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN INDIA. INDIAN PRESS MISINTERPRETED THIS AS ACT DIRECTED AGAINST INDIA SPECIFICALLY.

5. ALTHOUGH TARAPUR QUESTION EVENTUALLY RESOLVED SATISFACTORILY, IT GAVE RISE TO CONSIDERABLE PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT ALLEGED U.S. "THREAT" TO WITHHOLD NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLIES.

6. SINCE NUCLEAR TEST, U.S. HAS ESTABLISHED MORE RESTRICTIVE GUIDELINES ON THE TRAINING OF INDIAN NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS AT U.S. AEC FACILITIES IN ORDER TO PREVENT FLOW OF TECHNOLOGY DIRECTLY APPLICABLE TO NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES. TO DATE, FOUR INDIANS HAVE BEEN DENIED SUCH TRAINING, AND THE GOI MUST BE AWARE OF THIS BY NOW.

7. U.S. PRESS REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL (29 OF 30 INITIAL EDITORIALS WERE NEGATIVE). CONGRESSIONAL REACTION HAS ALSO BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL, AND PUNITIVE ANTI-INDIAN LONG AMENDMENT ADOPTED INTO LAW. (U.S. MUST VOTE AGAINST IDA LOAN TO INDIA).

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8. THUS, IF SOMEONE LIKE MRS. GANDHI IS LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE OF U.S. "PRESSURES" ON INDIA, THE ABOVE COULD PROVIDE RAW MATERIAL FOR SUCH CONCLUSION, NOTWITHSTANDING MODERATE USG REACTION TO DATE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATELY WITH GOI AND SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF TARAPUR ISSUE.

9. BOTH NSSM 156 (INDIAN NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS) AND NSSM 202 (PROLIFERATION STRATEGY), COPIES OF WHICH SECRETARY'S

PARTY CARRIES, INCLUDE OPTIONS RPT OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLE MULTILATERAL ACTIONS DESIGNED TO INHIBIT INDIA'S FURTHER NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT. SOME OF THESE OPTIONS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE STRATEGY PAPER AND SPECIAL PROPOSALS PREPARED FOR SECRETARY'S VISIT TO DELHI. WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET DECIDED TO PURSUE THESE POSSIBILITIES ON A MULTILATERAL BASIS. WHILE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THE INDIANS HAVE PICKED UP HINTS OF CONTENTS OF THESE U.S. STUDIES.

10. SINCE INDIAN TEST, WE HAVE IN FACT FOLLOWED MORE RESTRICTIVE POLICY TOWARD INDIA (1) TO AVOID STEPS BY OURSELVES OR OTHER LIKE-MINDED NATIONS THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO PROMOTING INDIA'S NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY, AND (2) SECONDARILY, TO CONFINE INDIA'S OWN POTENTIAL EXPORT OF ITS EXPLOSIVE TECHNOLOGY. IN OUR VIEW, THIS POLICY IS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH OUR CONTINUING OBJECTIVE OF AVOIDING FURTHER NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF INDIANS FROM THEIR VANTAGEPOINT SEE SUCH U.S. POLICY AS AIMED AT "PUNISHING" INDIA ALTHOUGH THAT IS NOT PRECISELY OUR OBJECTIVE. INGERSOLL

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